

Thanks a Billion!

# WELL AWARE

## Making Healthy Food Decisions

Almost all pre-packaged foods have a Nutrition Facts table. It looks the same on most foods. This makes it easy to find and easy to read.



The Nutrition Facts table gives you information about the nutritional value of a food:

- ⇒ Calories
- ⇒ 13 core nutrients
- ⇒ % of Daily Value of nutrients

All of the information in the Nutrition Facts table is **based on an amount of food**. This amount is always found at the top of the Nutrition Facts table.

Nutrients you may want more of are:

- ⇒ Fibre
- ⇒ Vitamin A
- ⇒ Calcium
- ⇒ Iron

Nutrients you may want less of are:

- ⇒ Fat
- ⇒ Saturated and trans fats
- ⇒ Sodium

### Why are trans fats a health concern?

Science shows that consuming either saturated or trans fat raises the blood levels of the so-called “**bad**” cholesterol (LDL-cholesterol). LDL-cholesterol is a risk for heart disease. In addition to raising “**bad**” cholesterol, trans fat also reduces the blood levels of the so-called “**good**” cholesterol (HDL-cholesterol). HDL-cholesterol protects against heart disease.

## Sodium in Canada

Canadians eat about 3400mg of sodium each day. This is more than **double** the amount we need. Sodium is an essential nutrient found in salt and many foods. Our bodies need a small amount of sodium to be healthy, but too much can lead to high blood pressure, a major risk factor for stroke, heart disease and kidney disease. Sodium intake has also been linked to an increased risk of osteoporosis, stomach cancer and severity of asthma.



It is recommended that people over the age of one year eat between 1000-1500 mg of sodium per day. People aged 14 and over should not eat more than 2300 mg sodium per day.



The % Daily Value (% DV) can help you make informed food choices. It provides a quick overview of the nutrient profile of a food. As a rule of thumb, remember the following numbers:



You can use the % DV to compare two different food products and make a better choice for you. Or you can use the % DV to choose products that are higher in the nutrients you want more of and lower in the nutrients you want less of.



### Did you know?

Using the Nutrition Facts table is worth it!

Making healthy food choices can help reduce your risk of nutrition-related chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes and stroke.

Health Canada [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

## The ingredient list shows all the ingredients in a packaged food

Ingredients are listed in order of weight, beginning with the ingredient that weighs the most and ending with the ingredient that weighs the least. This means that a food contains more of the ingredients found at the beginning of the list, and less of the ingredients at the end of the list.

### Ingredients with many names

Sometimes nutrients like saturated and trans fats, sodium, and sugar appear on ingredient lists under many different names. Here’s a list of the most commonly used terms:

**SATURATED FAT:** other names bacon, beef fat, butter, chicken fat, cocoa butter, coconut or coconut oil, hydrogenated fats and oils, lard, palm or palm kernel oil, powdered whole milk solids, shortening, suet, tallow.

**TRANS FAT:** other names hard margarine, hydrogenated fats and oils, partially hydrogenated fats and oils, shortening

**SODIUM:** other names baking powder, baking soda, brine, celery salt, disodium phosphate, garlic salt, monosodium glutamate (MSG), onion salt, salt, sodium alginate, sodium benzoate, sodium bisulfate, sodium propionate, soy sauce.

**SUGAR:** other names brown sugar, cane juice extract, corn syrup, demerara or turbinado sugar, dextrose, evaporated cane juice, fructose, galactose, glucose, glucose-fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, liquid sugar, maltose, molasses, sucrose, syrup, treacle.

**TIP:** a word ending in “ose” is usually sugar.



## Grocery Shopping 101

What you buy is what you and your family actually eat! Grocery shopping can be stressful, especially if you’re trying to stick to a healthy meal plan. Almost every aisle contains a tempting choice or two and it can be hard to resist your favorite snacks or sweets. The best way to shop? **Go with a plan.** Try these tips to help steer your cart away from unhealthy options and towards the ingredients for a delicious, healthy meal.

### ◆ Start with a list

Before you leave, set your menu plan for the week. Focus on dinners since they require more planning; breakfast and lunch tend to be more predictable. Write down all the ingredients you need, including staple items you may have run out of. A well-thought-out list can help curb impulse buying.

### ◆ Shop the perimeter first

Fresh produce, meats and dairy are usually stocked around the perimeter of the store, while processed foods tend to be in the centre. Walk the perimeter first to load up on fruits, vegetables, lean meats and low-fat dairy products. Check out items on your list as you go so that you only buy what you need for the week.

### ◆ Choose wisely in the centre

While the middle aisles tend to have processed foods, healthy options can still be found. For example, when choosing cereal, pick one that’s whole-grain (it should be the first item ingredient list). Opt for brown rice and whole-wheat pasta, as well as low-fat dressings and sauces.

### Cucumber Yogurt Dressing

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup chopped seeded peeled cucumber
- 3 tablespoons plain low-fat yogurt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon dried dill

**Preparation:** Place all ingredients in a blender and process until the mixture is smooth. Refrigerate dressing in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

### ◆ Check labels

Trying to choose a salad dressing? Compare nutrition labels. It doesn’t have to be a lengthy process. Quickly scan the key numbers: total calories per serving, grams of carbohydrates, fibre and sugar, total fat and serving size. Or an even healthier choice is to make your own dressing.

### ◆ Eat before you shop

Being hungry can make it harder to resist foods that you’re usually good at avoiding. Eating before you shop can make it easier to walk away from the freshly baked croissants.

### ◆ Load up on what you love!

If you’ve grown to love turnips or enjoy fresh seafood, find recipes that include them. Eating food that you like, cooked in healthy ways, makes it easier to stick to a healthy eating plan.

